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The collocational profile of *employment* and *work* in UK employment law

Introduction

Collocations are found in all languages and in all language varieties. They show that language does not in fact operate with single words but with more complex units. A collocation, or "the company words keep" as Nation put it (2008: 173), is a key to fluency in a foreign language. It is also a means to fluency in a special-purpose language. Each language and language variety has its own set of collocations that are typical to it, and their appropriate use is a sign of familiarity with that language. This is also true for languages for special purposes.

Collocation is in the range of interest of foreign language use. It is a linguistic phenomenon more and more often focused on in foreign language acquisition (for example in Leśniewska 2006; Zagórska 2013; Adamcová 2020). It is also being learned how important it is for specialist language learning, in particular if the language for special purposes (LSP) is also a foreign language for the student (Knowles 2012; Mroczyńska 2020; Zagórska 2022). It is in the scope of research into translation as collocations are not always formed in an analogical way in different languages. In turn, translators sometimes invent creative collocations that later become standard expressions in translation. This way they may be learnt as such by foreign language learners that may be unaware of the awkwardness of such phrases. Collocations are a distinctive feature of advanced learner linguistic knowledge (Taylor and Barker 2008: 246) that is valued and paid attention to in the interlinguistic human intercourse.

The paper seeks to learn about the collocational profile of *employment* and *work* in legislative documents governing employment relations in the UK and what practical application it may have for language users, taking into account the fact that there is a synonymous relation between the two words under analysis. In particular, the study investigates the following:

– the status of the words as terminological units and synonyms,
– the combinations in which the words appear in the corpus, including multi-word terms and collocations,
– the meaning of *employment* and *work* that the context of use implies, and
– the potential benefits of such empirical material in the foreign LSP use, including foreign language learning and translation practice as both synonyms and collocations are specific linguistic phenomena that may either contribute to understanding or hinder it.

1. Legal language

Language is the only avenue to learning about law. One cannot leave without the other. Law is an element of all walks of life and is discussed by people of different backgrounds: the educated and uneducated, those living in desolated areas and in big city centres. The language that each of those groups use to talk about law differs, but the concepts discussed remain the same. A lack of uniformity of legal language exist also at the specialist level. Goźdź-Roszkowski claims that "what is routinely referred to as 'legal language', represents an extremely complex type of discourse embedded in the highly varied institutional space of different legal systems and cultures" (Goźdź-Roszkowski 2012). It may take a written or spoken form. Its style differs from frozen and formal to consultative and casual (Danet 1980: 371 as referred to in Goźdź-Roszkowski 2012). A different perspective is presented by Wróblewski, who sees the language of law as either the language of the sources of law, that is legislature and contracts (in Polish *język prawny*) and the metalanguage of law, the language used among others by lawyers to talk about law (in Polish *język prawniczy*) (Wróblewski 1948). An analogical approach is presented by Bhatia (2006) when dividing legal genre into primary legal genre (primary sources of law) and secondary legal genre (a reproduction of legislation featuring a high degree of intertextuality with the primary

sources)[1]. De Groot proposes a similar division of legal vocabulary: (i) that used by legislators in acts of law, (ii) that used by lawyers of a legal system and in commentaries on that legal system, and (iii) that in general publications dealing with that legal system (De Groot 1996: 378). Subject to the above, legislative documents, which form the corpus under analysis in this paper, can be classified as written texts that present the language of legal documents taken as a demonstration of the language of law, in Wróblewski's terms, and featuring vocabulary used by legislators in legal acts.

Legal language is known for its precision, indeterminacy, specialization, complexity and conservatism (Goźdź-Roszkowski 2012). The features are realised at different levels. One of them is specialist vocabulary, including legal terms. A term can be defined as a lexical unit (one word or a multi-word phrase) representing a specific concept in a specific terminological system. In fields other than law, terms are defined by experts and for experts, in the area of law, legal terms are defined by legislators (who act as experts) for legislative purposes, and may be either directly defined or their meaning may be deduced from the context of legal documents. It sometimes happens that a co-text specifies the systemic meaning of a given term (see Rzepkowska 2021: 20–21). Legal documents may comprise various types of word combinations, such as multi-word terms, collocations, free combinations or prepositional phrases. Often, it is hard to differentiate between relatively fixed phrases, such as terms and collocations, and those expressions that are more prone to modifications (Biel 2012: 227). Nonetheless, what is certain is that their use is never incidental. In that environment, there seem to be little place for synonymous relations.

2. Synonyms in legal language

Synonymy is a gradable linguistic phenomenon that has been attracting scholars' interest for a long time. Synonymous relations range from very strong, for instance the case of absolute synonymy as defined by Lyons (1981: 148), to weak, for instance plesionymy or near-synonymy (Cruse 1986: 285––286). The distance in meaning between different examples of synonyms may make them fully interchangeable in all contexts, which is the case of absolute synonyms that are very rarely seen (Lyons 1981: 148; Cruse 2000: 156–160),

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[1] Klabal (2019: 167) relates to these language varieties as higher-order genre and lower-order genre, respectively.

partly interchangeable depending on the context, the case of complete synonyms (Lyons 1981: 148) and propositional synonyms (Cruse 2000: 156–160), or rarely interchangeable, for instance semantically a little more distant near-synonyms (Cruse 2000: 159). The interchangeability of synonyms is often dictated by the immediate environment, left and right context, the collocations they form and words they cooccur with. The more touch points, the more probable that the words are close synonyms.

Another level on which synonymy should be analysed is the accepted meaning of the words. In general language, the explanation of the meaning can be found in general language dictionaries, in the language for special purposes, the information can be looked for in LSP dictionaries covering terminology in a given field. The language of law is special in this case, because the meaning of terms should be also looked for in individual statutes that make law and tend to define terms for own purposes or for the purposes of a particular branch of law. Jopek-Bosiacka stresses the "principles of semantic accuracy or language consistency" (Jopek-Bosiacka 2011: 16) that are indispensable for law to function. For that reason using synonyms is generally unwelcome in legal texts as terms that look different are expected to refer to different concepts in the field of law.

Welcome or not, synonymy is present in legal contexts and has been subject to a number of studies (Goźdź-Roszkowski 2013; Matulewska 2016; Cao 2007). The phenomenon is usually defined in a broad way in the context of legal language. Discussing legal language, Matulewska explains that synonyms are expressions in the same part of speech but different in terms of spelling, with the same referential meaning but not always pragmatic meaning (Matulewska 2016: 163). Similarly, Matilla understands synonymy as a situation when two or more terms represent the same concept (Matilla 2006: 144).

This, in a way, flexible approach to synonymy in legal language makes plesionyms or near-synonyms very handy when discussing synonymous relations in legal texts. Plesionymy is a semantic relation between words that are not fully interchangeable in all contexts despite being very similar. What differs them is their denotation, connotation, implicature, emphasis and register[2]. As a result the meanings of plesionyms are not identical (Edmonds and

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[2] The denotation of a word is its context-independent meaning. The connotation of a word is its meaning beyond the denotational meaning, including such explicit aspects as emotions, attitudes, tone or style. The implication refers to those elements of meaning that are not explicit. The emphasis is an element differentiating between words if certain semantic features are

Hirsty 2002: 107; Yevchuk 2021: 204; Austin 1962). Cruse refers to an analogical phenomenon as near-synonymy and places it next to absolute synonyms and propositional synonyms as the least similar type on the scale of similarity. Cruse says that "permissible differences between near-synonyms must be either minor, or backgrounded, or both" (Cruse 2000: 159). Minor differences may include: "adjacent position on the scale of 'degree': *fog:mist* [...], certain adverbial specialisations of verbs *amble:stroll* [...], aspectual distinctions: *calm:placid* [...] and difference of prototype centre: *brave* [...]: *courageous*" (Cruse 2000: 159–160). The example of backgrounded distinction given by Cruse is *pretty* and *handsome*[3], which share the same propositional meaning "good-looking", but the former is usually used to describe a woman, the latter, a man.

The long scale of similarity between synonyms indicated by scholars provides grounds for different classifications of synonyms in the literature, among others the already presented division by Cruse (2000) and Lyons (1981). Klabal proposes a simple grammatical division of synonyms into adjectival, verbal, nominal and prepositional synonyms (Klabal 2022: 72–73). Matulewska classifies legal synonyms under two groups, those found in different languages (two types): vernacular and legal, and legal and other languages for special purposes; and those found in legal language (four types) due to: a lack of terminological consistency, passage of time, different text genre and different branches of law (for more details see Matulewska 2016: 164–170).

Scholars highlight the importance of context in recognising synonymous relations between words and phrases. Discussing legal language in translation, Cao proves that discerning the legal meaning of a word for instance in relation to the general meaning is done through the context in which the word is found in legal texts. This is because differences between legal synonyms lie in their connotations, the type of legal text they appear in and the area of law they apply to. The context can be understood in a broad way as an area of law, or as a direct linguistic context: the text, paragraph or

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stressed in one word and not in the other. The register differs words if they are used in different circumstances (see more in Edmonds and Hirsty 2002).

[3] Worth noting is the fact that *handsome* is also used in reference to women in the meaning "very good-looking, and also healthy and strong" (https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/eb/qa/can-the-word-handsome-be-used-for-women). Yet, by saying that a woman is handsome, one refers to strength, a typically masculine feature, which makes the adjective seem more typical of men than women, though.

sentence in which the word occurs (Cao 2007: 70). Jopek-Bosiacka also refers to a context as "particularly important" when differentiating between words of similar meaning, especially those legal verbs that come from general language (Jopek-Bosiacka 2011: 10).

The review of literature shows that synonymy is a gradable phenomenon recognised in legal language as well. Although the cases of absolute and complete synonymy are rare and unwelcome in the language of law, in particular in the case of nominal synonyms that may turn out to be legal terms (part of specialist vocabulary which should be unambiguous), synonymy in a broader sense is more frequent. It may even contribute to the specialist, also foreign, language acquisition according to the theory of learning burden by Nation (1990, 2001). The theory says that it is easier to learn something that resembles knowledge already known. This may refer to both the concept represented by a given word or phrase as well as syntagmatic relations the synonymous phrases form.

3. Collocations

Grasping the meaning of words is always done in a certain context and through that context. Linguistic context is a means to unlock the potential of specialist vocabulary and lets it be appropriately understood. The context may take the form of a field of study, for instance law as a whole, its branch, a legal text or a certain text type, a paragraph, a sentence or even more narrowly the immediate left and right context of a given expression. The last one is where collocations are found.

"Dictionary of Lexicography" defines a collocation as "the semantic compatibility of grammatically adjacent words" (Hartmann and James 1998: 32–33). Credited to Firth (1957), the term collocation is often recognised on the scale of idiomaticity as a concept between idioms, the meaning of with is not a direct derivative of its components, and free combinations, the use of which is not restricted at any point (Cowie 1994: 115–116; Sinclair 2005). As opposed to an idiom, the meaning of a collocation can be deduced from the meaning of its constituents (Hartmann and James 1998: 32–33; Cowie 1998: 30). The borderline between a collocation and an idiom on the one hand and a free combination on the other is sometimes unclear. Therefore, the studies into collocations resource to different methods to make the distinction between them less blurry.

Years of research into collocations have shown that the way collocations are understood and thus the identification of example collocations vary and largely depend on the approach presented by a scholar. Mel'čuk very strongly states that not even a universal proposal for the definition of a collocation can be deduced from the literature (Mel'čuk 1998: 23). Siepmann has grouped the approaches to collocations under three types: a frequency-based approach, semantic-oriented approach and pragmatically-driven approach (Siepmann 2005: 410). Michta and Mroczyńska see the frequency-based approach and phraseological approach as those among the leading in contemporary studies on the subject. Yet, each of the attitudes have their pros and cons and, as the authors justly notice, only a balance between them produces the desired or close-to-the-desired effects (Michta and Mroczyńska 2021: 14)[4].

The frequency-based approach has recently gained popularity due to the accessibility of corpus analytics. It recognises collocations based on quantitative methods. What serves as the indication of collocability is the association measure, or probability of cooccurrence, that is calculated with formulas using the following data:
– the total number of tokens in the corpus,
– the frequency of the node in the corpus,
– the frequency of the collocate in the corpus,
– the frequency of the collocation (the node and the collocate as a whole) in the corpus, and
– the collocation window[5] size (Brezina 2018: 70).
However, what is produced with that approach is only a list of candidate collocations that need to be verified in terms of semantics and syntax. Here, additional criteria of classifying phraseological units can be used. Apart from those already listed above, Patiño suggests they should include: combinatory restrictions, degree of compositionality and degree of transparency[6] (Patiño 2014: 122–124).

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[4] Owing to space restrictions, the characteristics of each of the approaches cannot be discussed in detail. More information can be found in Siepmann 2005 and Michta and Mroczyńska 2021.
[5] A collocation window is the span of words between the node and the collocate.
[6] Patiño explains that the degree of compositionality is the degree to which the meaning of the whole unit is a sum of the meaning of component words, and the degree of transparency is the level of semantic opaqueness of constituents of a collocation, as either both elements, the node and collocate, can be transparent or only the node can be transparent and the collocate can be opaque resulting in a fully transparent collocation, for instance *to breach an obligation*, where the meaning of *an obligation* is transparent, and the meaning of *to breach* is opaque, but the meaning of the whole collocation remains transparent (Patiño 2014: 123).

4. The study

This study presents a review of two nouns, *employment* and *work*, which are found in the UK employment-related statutes. It is expected to bring information about the collocational profile of the selected words in a strictly legislative context of 12 statutes governing employment issues in the UK. Due to the fact that these are two nouns that are subject to analysis, they are looked at from the point of view of nominal synonymy. Klabal describes nominal synonyms as synonyms that are "often terminological in nature and usually cannot be used interchangeably, or may also be a case of collocations or jurisdictional variation" (Klabal 2022: 72). That statement is to be verified in the course of the corpus analysis.

This corpus study is supported with Sketch Engine, text analysis software. Corpus tools are useful in learning about word combinations. They provide researchers with simple frequency counts and more complex statistical measures relying on calculating the frequency of single words and combinations of words. Such algorithms as MI-score, MI2-score, Delta P, Cohen's d and logDice, which is used by default in Sketch Engine, (Brezina 2018: 70) are used to calculate the association measure between words in corpora and propose candidate collocations that later can be verified in various immediate contexts with the concordance search.

The study is also expected to shed some light on synonymy in legislative documents as the two words, *employment* and *work*, are treated as synonyms in a number of online thesauruses. Their collocational profile may reveal the touch points between the two terms, if such exist, and thus show whether the legislator used them as synonyms or not. The analysis of the immediate context of use is very important here. The context is understood in the research in a broad sense: as the whole corpus, an individual legal document, a paragraph, a sentence or the immediate neighbourhood of the words under review, depending on the stage of the analysis.

4.1. The corpus

Sinclair defines a corpus as "a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research" (Sinclair 2005: 16). This is the meaning of the term also applied in this paper. The collected corpus is expected to represent the legal language of

employment law in the UK. The selection of documents relied on the information found on government websites and commercial legal websites[7] discussing employment regulations in the UK, which listed 12 statutes as the fundamental enactments regulating employment relations in the UK. The corpus under analysis comprises the 12 documents, with 1.2 million tokens[8] and more than 760 thousand words[9] (Figure 1[10]). It presents a broad spectrum of employment related issues in the UK system of law. There may be other complementary acts of law, yet, based on specialist information referred to above, the sample covers the majority of employment regulations and should be deemed to be representative of that area of UK law and this LSP. All the documents were downloaded from the UK official legislation website and uploaded into Sketch Engine[11], a corpus analysis tool used in the study.
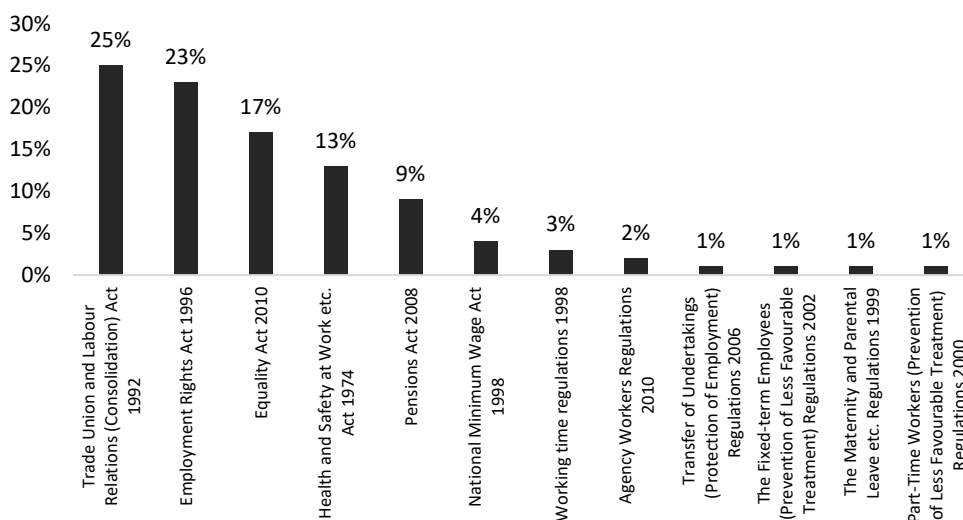

Figure 1. UK Employment Law corpus composition
Source: own work

Figure 1 illustrates the size of documents in the corpus, with the two biggest constituting nearly half of the corpus and the next three making up nearly 40%. The five discuss a wide range of issues. Focusing on specific areas of employment law, the remaining seven documents (numbered 6 through 12) stand at 13% altogether. That shows large discrepancies between the sizes of individual statutes.

4.2. Selection of words for analysis

The paper looks at two words, *employment* and *work*. The term *employment* was selected as one of the fundamental terms in employment relations. The synonyms of *employment* found in three online thesauruses: thesaurus.com, Merriam-Webster's thesaurus and Collins thesaurus[12], were compared with their absolute frequency found with the Sketch Engine Wordlist function. That step gave only one result, the word *work* (AF of 1,210). Initially, more than one synonym was expected to be found, but in the end only *work* met the following two criteria: (1) the words need to be synonyms or near-synonyms to the word *employment*, (2) the words need to show high absolute frequency (AF) in the corpus to be worth analysing (AF higher than 100).

LSP dictionary definitions served as a platform for learning about the synonymous relations between the words. The definitions were taken from "Black's Law Dictionary" (Garner 1999).

> *employment* n. 1. The act of employing; the state of being employed. 2. Work for which one has been hired and is being paid by an employer.

> *work* n. 1. Physical or mental exertion to attain an end, esp. as controlled by and for the benefit of the employer; labor. 2. *Copyright.* An original expression, in fixed or tangible form (such as paper, audiotape, or computer disk), that may be entitled to common-law or statutory copyright protection.

LSP dictionary definitions show that the two words can be treated as terms and may be synonymous in some contexts.

Employment has two meanings and is used in both meanings in the corpus. The first meaning places *employment* in a way in opposition to *work* as it is the employer who employs and the employee who works. Yet *employment*

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[12] *thesaurus.com*, https://www.thesaurus.com/browse; *Merriam-Webster.com*. 2023. https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus; *Collinsdictionary.com*. https://www.collins-dictionary.com/dictionary/english-thesaurus.

in that meaning defines the relationship between the two parties whose final objective is to accomplish a common goal: do the work or execute the contract; the propositional meaning seems to be the same: 'to do the job'. The second meaning of *employment* makes it a close synonym of *work*, its hyponym, as *work* is used to define the term *employment*.

Work has two meanings but only one is applicable to the relevant context. The definition directly relates work to an employer, a party to an employment relationship. It can be assumed that it may complete the definition of *employment* by explaining what work is.

The two terms are found in all 12 documents constituting the corpus. This proves that the terms are widely used throughout all areas of employment law, which provides us with grounds to believe that they play a major role in discussing employment-related issues. This makes the two an interesting material for studying that may present valuable findings for LSP learning and teaching purposes and other foreign language use.

5. Research method

The study shows the cooccurrence of words relying on basic grammatical terms. The classification of collocations extracted from the corpus follows the classification proposed by Benson et al (2009: XXXI-XXXIV) in "The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English". The classification has been modified to meet the purposes of the study by including the relation of possession and the most frequent prepositional combinations with the studied terms. The classification includes various combinations with the node, which is always one of the terms under analysis, and a collocate. The collocate can be an adjective or noun (collectively referred to as a premodifier), a different noun in the postnode position or a verb. Prepositional phrases are combinations of the node with a preposition and a verb, adjective, adverb or a noun, depending on the frequency and logDice score[13] of the whole phrases. The classification of collocations in the paper is as follows:

- premodifier + NODE,
- NODE + noun,

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[13] logDice is a statistic measure for identifying co-occurrence. Sketch Engine applies it to identifying collocations as its value indicates the typicality (or strength) of the collocation based on the frequency of the node and the collocate and the frequency of the whole collocation. Theoretically, the higher the score the more typical the collocation (https://www.sketchengine.eu/my_keywords/logdice)

- verb + NODE (object),
- NODE (subject) + verb,
- noun's+ NODE, and
- NODE + preposition + verb/adjective/adverb/noun, or verb/adjective/adverb/noun + preposition + NODE (a separate analysis below).

Sketch Engine allows users to process texts with a number of tools. This study takes advantage of three of them: Word Sketch, Concordance, and Wordlist[14]. The candidate collocations found in the corpus in word sketches were verified with the Concordance tool that listed all contexts in which a given word combination appears in the corpus. To be accepted for further analysis, the candidate collocations needed to appear at least three times in the corpus (AF of 3) in three different contexts (that means either left context or right context needed to differ). A word combination was rejected if Sketch Engine mistakenly recognised it as a meaningful phrase.

6. *Employment* and *work* in specialised collocations and multi-word terms

The corpus analysis resulted in a number of word combinations with *employment* and *work*. They are nominal synonyms that are deemed to be terminological units, as the LSP dictionary classifies them as such. Therefore, they are not expected to be interchangeable in legal contexts (Klabal 2022: 72), a specialist language that dislikes synonymy (see Iluk 2017). It is assumed that the legislator used them in a strictly terminological way, having in mind their specialist meaning.

Word combinations where *employment* is the node are found in each and every grammatical group under analysis (Table 1). A few noun phrases where the node is either the part modified by the collocate or the part modifying the collocate are legal terms that are defined in the statutes; these are: *Crown employment*, *offshore employment*, *retail employment*, *employment agency* and *employment business*. Other word combinations are deemed to be relatively strong collocates, considering their high logDice score (even if the frequency was lower than 5, the concordance search showed at least three different contexts of occurrence of the collocations).

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[14] The Wordlist tool was used at the initial stage of selecting words for analysis.

The verb phrases can be used as a guideline for discovering the meaning of the node as they illustrate what the node can do and what can be done to it. It seems that in a few collocations with verbs the word *employment* is used in the meaning 'the state of being employed' (Garner 1999), as it appears to be relating to the state between the employee and employer. These are *to terminate*, *to renew*, *to maintain* and *to refuse employment* and *employment ends*, *ceases* and *begins*. Others: *to offer*, *to seek*, *to find*, and *to remunerate employment* may equally relate to the state of being employed and to the work done under employment.

The possessive relation with *employment* depicts the parties whom the employment 'belongs to'. Here the meaning of employment may be either the state of being employed or work done under employment relationship.

Word combinations with *work* as a node are less numerous than those with *employment*. Noun phrases (premodifier + node and node + noun) that are not legal terms seem to be strong collocates as their logDice score is high, all of them appear more than five times in the corpus and at least in three different contexts. Three collocates are the same as the collocates of *employment*. These are: *alternative*, *offshore* and *agency* (bolded in Table 1). The same as *offshore employment*, *offshore work* is a term defined in the statutes. The definitions of the two specialist phrases clearly show that they are different legal terms. Another term is formed by the collocate *agency*. In the statutes one can find a legal definition of *temporary work agency*, a three-word term. It represents a different concept than the aforementioned *employment agency*. *Work* also forms legal terms with such collocates as *shop*, *contract* and *night*.

A review of verb phrases formed with *work* shows that *work* means a certain activity, as defined above. There is one verb, the verb *offer*, that is used both with *employment* and *work*. Although the two terms may have different meanings depending on the context, the combination with *offer* seems to convey the same idea: 'to give somebody an opportunity to earn a living.' There are no word combinations with a verb and *work* as a subject.

The possessive relation formed with *woman* and *person* shows that *work* relates more to an individual than to an employment relationship[15].

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[15]An initial review of the corpus has shown that the context of use of *worker* and *employee*, synonyms that are derivatives of *employment* and *work*, has brought an analogical observation as a worker seems to be treated more personally in opposition to an employee. The issue, however, is a subject of a different study.

Table 1. Collocates of *employment* and *work* in the corpus

Node	Employment	Work
premodifier + NODE	Crown* employment, **offshore* employment**, continuous employment, retail* employment, comparable employment, **alternative employment**, relevant employment, (frequency under 5) new employment	shop* work, contract* work, **alternative work**, night* work, suitable work, **offshore* work**, similar work
NODE + noun	employment tribunal, employment service, **employment agency*,** employment adviser, employment condition, employment service-provider, employment situation, employment particulars, employment contract, (absolute frequency under 5) employment rights, employment business*	**work agency***, work experience
verb + NODE[16]	terminate employment, **offer employment**, renew employment, maintain employment, refuse employment, (absolute frequency under 5) seek employment, find employment, remunerate employment,	do work, perform work, start work, have work, **offer work**, carry out work (absolute frequency under 5) provide work
NODE + verb[17]	employment ceases, employment begins, (absolute frequency under 5) employment ends	–
noun's + NODE	employee's employment, person' employment, worker's employment	woman's work, person's work

Source: own study (bold stands for units that appear as a collocate of more than one node; asterisk (*) indicates a legal term defined in the statutes)

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[16] The verb *be* has been excluded from the list as being too common to form a typical collocation without an additional object that would make it specific.

[17] The verbs *be, have, take, give, do* and *make* have been excluded from the list as being too common to form a typical collocation without an additional object that would make them specific.

Table 2 presents the results of a review of prepositional phrases with *employment* and *work* in the corpus. The phrases are grouped according to different prepositions, with the nodes, *employment* and *work*, placed either before or after the preposition.

Phrases with *of* shed some light on the meaning of *employment* and *work*. Phrases *of + employment* relate to the state of being employed or the state of employing rather than to the work performed. On the other hand, phrases *of + work* relate to the particulars of the activities done: the place, type and time of work, and one's capability to do work.

Other combinations with prepositions are worth analysing to discover similarities and differences between *employment* and *work*, to avoid future confusion. For example *in* is used more often with *employment* and the meanings of such phrases relate to *employment* as a state, an abstract concept, while and the meanings of the phrases *at + work* relate to *work*-related empirical concepts like a place or time of doing work.

Table 2. Prepositional phrases with *employment* and *work*

Preposition	Employment	Work
of	contract of employment condition of employment termination of employment year of employment course of employment duration of employment week of employment duty of employment	place of work type of work hours of work amount of work incapable of work
for	training for employment	work for (a number of) hours
in	employment in force person in employment to engage in employment worker in employment to be in employment employed in employment	employed in work
at		to be at work person at work safety at work use at work
under	employment under contract	
with	employment with an employer	worker with work
from		absent/absence from work to suspend from work

Source: own work

7. Findings and conclusions

The paper addresses the issue of collocations in the context of legal language as an example of an LSP. The research done on the corpus compiled by the author to analyse the language of UK employment law has brought a number of findings:

– The legal dictionary definitions of *employment* and *work* show that the words are treated as terminological units, terms that are relatively broadly defined. Yet, depending on the area of law, they may have different meanings. *Employment* is found in two meanings in the dictionary. Both are observed in the corpus, but a look at the collocational profile of *employment* suggests that its meaning as 'the act of employing; the state of being employed' prevails. The other meaning relates *employment* directly to *work*, as the latter is used to define the former. *Work* is found in two meanings in the dictionary, but only one is applicable in the context of employment law; the other is a copyright term.

– Being defined terms, *employment* and *work* are not even close to being absolute synonyms. Their relation can be described as near-synonymous as they share a common propositional meaning in certain contexts. Therefore, they can be classified as propositional synonyms, or more generally as near-synonyms.

– The word combinations in which the terms appear in the corpus provide a window on their usage. Not only collocations did the text analysis reveal but also multi-word terms, expressions that are not prone to lexical modifications as they should not be substituted with other lexical units and should not be seen as absolute synonyms of any other word or term.

– There are three collocates forming noun phrases with the nodes that are the same for *employment* and *work*. Two of them form different multi-word terms with each of them and thus cannot be recognised as synonyms. Their legal definitions found in the statutes prove that they do not share any propositional meaning and should be neither treated or used interchangeably in any context. *Alternative* is the only collocate used both with *employment* and *work* that does not form a terminological unit. The meaning of the two collocations with that adjective seem to result in phrases that are to some extent synonymous, meaning 'a job different than the one discussed'.

– A review of verb collocates of *employment* indicates that the term is used in the meaning 'the state of being employed/employing' in the majority of cases. Yet, there are a few verbs which may be equally used with *work* and

the propositional meaning of the whole phrases would be very similar, but still the connotation and the use different. Only one verb is used with both terms, that is *to offer*.

– The study shows that, although *employment* and *work* can be classified as near-synonyms or propositional synonyms, they have relatively few collocates in common in the relevant corpus, and if such collocates are the same, they often form terminological units in combination with the nodes. The multi-word terms are very clearly defined in the statutes as different terms and their meaning excludes the possibility of them being treated as synonymous phrases. Such a situation may result from the nature of the corpus, which is a collection of legislative texts. The clarity and unambiguity typical of that kind of legal context discourages synonymous relations, especially those between nouns and noun phrases, which may be instances of legal terminology.

– Corpus studies on original legal texts reveal also details about the correct use of prepositions and the way they collocate with other words. Prepositions are an element of foreign language education that poses particular problems to learners and teachers and their correct use is one of indicators of foreign language fluency. A characteristic of LSP, of legal language as well, is the specific use of prepositions that may differ from the general language use. Therefore, it is important to pay students' attention to that area of specialist languages. One of the ways to do that is to expose learners to unabridged texts, either full or extracts from them, to let them find the phrases in real-life contexts.

The above makes legislative texts a good source of collocations for foreign LSP learners. The context may let them differentiate between terms and learn specialist collocations that native experts in the field of law find idiomatic. On the other hand, translation of legislative texts may pose a lot of challenges, as it requires precision in selecting equivalent collocations in the target language, having in mind terminological units that they may include.

This study is another small step in discovering the intricacies of the language of UK employment law. Surely, legal collocations present an area worth exploring further in the context of the collocational profile of other legal terms and expressions, and the application of such research in foreign language acquisition, specialist language acquisition and translation studies.

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Profil kolokacyjny *employment* i *work*
w brytyjskim prawie pracy

W artykule zbadano profil kolokacyjny dwóch słów o podobnym znaczeniu *zatrudnienia* i *pracy*, w brytyjskim prawie pracy. Badanie miało na celu rzucenie światła na zachowanie tych dwóch słów w specjalistycznym kontekście językowym brytyjskiego prawa pracy. Jest to badanie korpusowe oparte na materiale 12 brytyjskich ustaw o zatrudnieniu. Materiał empiryczny został zebrany i przetworzony za pomocą Sketch Engine, narzędzia do analizy korpusowej. Badanie w szczególności dotyczy: (a) statusu słów jako jednostek terminologicznych i synonimów, (b) kombinacji słów, w których słowa pojawiają się w korpusie, (c) znaczenia, jakie implikuje kontekst użycia oraz (d) potencjalnych korzyści z takiego materiału empirycznego w obszarze języka obcego do celów specjalnych. Wyniki sugerują, że *zatrudnienie* i *praca* są synonimami, jednak używa się ich w różnych kombinacjach słów w kontekście brytyjskiego prawa pracy, co może wynikać ze ściśle legislacyjnego kontekstu, który nie sprzyja synonimizacji.

Abstract: The paper investigates the collocational profile of two words of similar meaning, i.e. employment and work, in the UK employment law. The study is intended to shed some light on the behaviour of the two words in the specialist language context of UK employment law. It is a corpus study based on a corpus of 12 UK employment statutes compiled for the purpose of analysing this area of English legal language. The empirical material is collected and processed with Sketch Engine, a corpus analysis tool. In particular the study looks at (a) the status of the words as terminological units and synonyms, (b) word combinations in which the words appear in the corpus, (c) the meaning that the context of use implies, and (d) the potential benefits of such empirical material in the area of foreign language for special purposes use. The findings suggest that employment and work are synonyms, yet they are used in different word combinations in the context of UK employment law which may derive from the strictly legislative context that does not welcome synonymy.